



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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Land Use and Natural Resources – Housing and Community Programs – Environmental Health – Building and Safety – Code Compliance

PRESS RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – County Response to Assist Individuals Living at “Camp Hope”

The health, safety, and welfare of County residents is the top priority of Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors and Staff. Due to potential health risks at the location of “Camp Hope”, the County is working to relocate individuals off the property and into safe housing. Please see below for additional information regarding this effort to provide safe housing for persons residing at Camp Hope.

What enforcement action is the County taking?

The site where “Camp Hope” is located was historically used as a municipal dump site for the Sonora area. Municipal waste was brought to the site and burned, and therefore the property contains burn ash, which can contain hazardous materials. Additionally, camping is not an allowed land use on the property, and the accumulation of solid waste, on-site grading, and construction of non-permitted structures has resulted in several violations of the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code.

The Camp Hope property has served as a location for unsheltered individuals to go to. In addition to the non-permitted shelters constructed on the site, there has been an accumulation of garbage, human waste, combustible and noncombustible rubbish, mattresses, hazardous materials and waste, waste tires, and abandoned vehicles. For additional information about waste that can be found in homeless encampments, please visit <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/illegaldump/homelesscamp>.

What services are being provided to individuals at Camp Hope?

Community partners have created an Emergency Housing and Supportive Services plan to support those displaced by this enforcement. The team, comprised of Resiliency Village, Public Health, Behavioral Health, In-Home Supportive Services, CalWORKs, CalFRESH, ATCAA, Nancy’s Hope, The Refuge, and Give Someone A Chance is building capacity to triage individuals prior to transition to ensure engagement and access to service, and move people safely from the property and to safe housing. Some of the services that will be offered are emergency housing, COVID Emergency Case Management, employment and training support, substance abuse services, mental health programs, and medical care.

Many important partnerships between the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors and key stakeholders have contributed to this robust plan including the City of Sonora, Adventist Health, the Me Wuk Health Clinic, Mathieson Health Center, Center for a Non-Violent Community, and the Sonora Area Foundation. As community partners we acknowledge that homelessness affects our entire community and we are committed to lowering the impact of this plan on our community, businesses and residents.

Which agencies are taking the enforcement action?

The enforcement actions being taken at the property are two: 1) a Code Enforcement action for violations of the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code, and 2) action taken by the County's Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) in conjunction with CalRecycle. The County's Local Enforcement Agency is within the Division of Environmental Health, which is a component of the Community Development Department, along with Code Enforcement. The LEA is responsible for ensuring that State waste management programs are primarily carried out through LEA, and have the primary responsibility for ensuring the correct operation and closure of solid waste facilities in the state. They also have responsibilities for guaranteeing the proper storage and transportation of solid wastes.

The LEA is the local arm of CalRecycle ([California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery](#)) which is a department within the [California Environmental Protection Agency](#). CalRecycle administers and provides oversight for all of California's state-managed non-hazardous waste handling and recycling programs.

How long do individuals have to leave the site?

Individuals will have 90 days to relocate and the County will provide services to assist with such relocation. The County has found that most individuals are willing to relocate once they are informed of the violation, offered services and shelter, and understand that they need to vacate by a certain date.

Why is the County taking action now?

This site is private property, however the County has been actively monitoring the property and activities of those living on the site. The County has previously notified the property owners of concerns about the developments on the site, and has been consulting with CalRecycle throughout the process. County staff needed to secure funding and alternative temporary housing facilities to ensure that individuals living on the property had an option for shelter once leaving the property. In addition, COVID safety precautions limited the action that the County could take regarding moving individuals off the site.